

K-12 Students to Develop Innovative Solutions for Water Conservation – Orange County Department of Education Launches Water INNOVATION NOW (WIN) CONTEST

COSTA MESA, CA, SEPTEMBER 17, 2008 – Water Unifies, the international conference on water scarcity, global changes, and groundwater management resources convened by the University of California, Irvine (UCI) and UNESCO, announces a partnership with the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) in the Water Innovation Now (WIN) contest which will challenge students from kindergarten through twelfth grade to create presentations via PowerPoint, video, or poster board that demonstrate innovative solutions to the water crisis. Winning entries will be presented by students to international delegates at the conference on December 3, 2008.

“Climate variability, population growth, and expanding urbanization are the types of global changes that are adversely affecting water availability and leading to chronic water shortage,” said Bill Cooper, Director and Professor, Urban Water Research Center, University of California, Irvine. “During the conference we will be sharing ideas for innovative solutions and we are so pleased to have the students from Orange County share their ideas as well.”

William M. Habermehl, Orange County Superintendent of Schools, stated, “Through this collaboration, students will be empowered to share their creative solutions for water conservation with representatives and scientists from around the world, and they will be inspired to form a partnership for global stewardship of the environment. A partnership of this sort has the capacity to benefit the current generation and future generations to come.”

Over thirty companies have jumped on board to sponsor the contest and to incentivize the students to participate. Disney’s Environmentality Challenge, Action Sports Environmental Coalition (ASEC), Ocean Institute, Quiksilver, Wyland Foundation, Roxy, Element, Tavarua Resort, Univision, Fuel TV and many more have donated cash, prizes, and services to make the contest irresistible to kids. The first place prize is a trip for the winner and his or her parents/guardians to the Tavarua Resort in Fiji for a surf vacation. Other prizes include “hang out” sessions with professional athletes; surfers Rob Machado and Rochelle Ballard, and skaters Danny Way, Bob Burnquist and Geoff Rowley.

“Through programs run by the Ocean Institute and OCDE Instructional Services and Inside the Outdoors®, we can see that kids get it! They understand what pollution is doing to our planet and the importance of preservation and conservation efforts,” said Ana Rothwell, UCI-UNESCO Youth Committee Chair. “Our job is to make it fun for kids and to help them in their efforts to be spokespeople for our planet.”

The contest will begin the week of September 22 and entries are due on October 31, 2008. Projects will be submitted through an online portal set up by OCDE and will be judged on innovation, creativity, and knowledge about the issue they are focused on.

WIN Contest details are available at www.win.ocde.us

For more information, please contact Ana Rothwell, UCI-UNESCO Youth Committee Chair, at ana@ipwexperience.com or 714-754-7475, or Denise Antrim, Orange County Department of Education Science Coordinator, at dantrim@ocde.us or 714-966-4381.

